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SB 1076

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR PLANS AND CONSTRUCTION TO UPGRADE
THE SAND ISLAND, HONOLULU, AND WAIANAE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS
TO THE SECONDARY TREATMENT LEVEL

Statement for
House Committee on
Planning, Energy, and Environmental Protection
Public Hearing - February 23, 1989

By
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SB 1076 would appropriate State funds for upgrading wastewater treatment facilities at Sand Island, Honouliuli, and Waianae from existing primary levels to secondary treatment capabilities. Our statement on this bill does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

The Department of Public Works of the City and County of Honolulu has published estimates of over \$300 million to perform the upgrades referred to in this bill and some \$10 million increases in annual plant operating costs. We have conducted an exhaustive review of the scientific, technical, and observational studies relevant to the question of the necessity of secondary treatment at these plants. We conclude that at best, secondary treatment would produce no measurable improvement to the quality of the receiving waters. There is evidence that going to secondary actually may cause a more significant impact to the receiving water environment. Furthermore, it will place additional stress on the state's limited landfill capacity for solid wastes.

Public opinion on this matter has been strongly in favor of the proposed upgrade, primarily in response to alarm over catastrophic impacts on coastal water quality associated with sewage discharges on the east coast. The physical, biological and chemical oceanographic environment in Hawaii is not comparable. What is environmentally appropriate, best available treatment technology, to a continental coastal city with high population density and heavy industrial discharges is not necessarily appropriate for an island based community in the middle of a nutrient poor Pacific Ocean.

The scientific and technically knowledgeable community unanimously supports the maintenance of primary treatment as the preferred option for Hawaii's deep ocean wastewater outfalls. Furthermore, the expenditure of such large sums of money on a project having no demonstrable environmental benefit is appalling when so many other worthy environmental problems need attention.